

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-11. (Canceled).

12. (New) A surgical stapling device, comprising:

an elongate housing;

a surgical staple slidable longitudinally within the housing towards a free forward end thereof, the staple having two forwardly pointing legs and a back having a rearward extension;

an actuator slidable forwardly within the housing for driving the staple towards the free end of the housing;

means for restraining the rearward extension on the back of the staple against forward movement beyond a predetermined point such that further forward movement of the actuator bends the staple to bring the free ends of the legs towards one another to close the staple; and

means for releasing the closed staple.

13. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the rearward extension is rupturably joined to the back of the staple such that the staple is released by forward movement of the actuator beyond the predetermined point at which the staple is closed while the extension is restrained.

14. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the back of the staple is disposed substantially transverse the longitudinal axis of the housing and the two forwardly pointing legs extend at an angle from opposite ends of the back, the back of the staple having a center section and two outer sections, the actuator engaging the outer sections of the back of the staple and the restraining means restraining the center section of the staple back such that further forward movement of the actuator bends the outer sections of the back of the staple forwardly relative to the center section.

15. (New) The device of claim 14, wherein the back of the staple is adapted for preferential bending at the junction between the center and outer sections.

16. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the extension extends rigidly from the staple back and has a stop means which comes to abut against a cooperating stop means within the housing when the back of the staple reaches the predetermined point.

17. (New) The device of claim 14, wherein the center section of the back of the staple has a greater area in a plane normal to the longitudinal axis of the housing than the outer sections.
18. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein there are two staples disposed spaced apart one above the other and each has a respective rearward extension, the rearward extensions being connected together and both staples being driven forwardly and closed simultaneously by at least one actuator.
19. (New) The device of claim 18, further including an elongated locator member slidable axially within the housing between a forward position wherein the locator member projects beyond the free end of the housing to enter a puncture site in a liquid-carrying vessel in a human or animal, thereby to locate the free end of the housing at the puncture site, and a rearward position wherein the locator member is retracted into the housing, the locator member passing between the two rearward extensions and being retracted into the housing prior to closure of the staples.
20. (New) The device of claim 19, wherein the locator member comprises a hollow tube and a guidewire extends within the locator tube and emerges from the forward end of the tube.
21. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the staple and rearward extension are made as an integral structure by stamping and bending a metal sheet.
22. (New) A surgical staple comprising a back and two forwardly pointing legs, wherein the back of the staple has a rearward extension to allow the back of the staple to be restrained against movement in a surgical stapling device while the legs are bent towards one another by forward movement of an actuator to close the staple.
23. (New) The surgical staple of claim 22, wherein the rearward extension is rupturably joined to the back of the staple.
24. (New) A surgical stapling device, comprising:
an elongate housing adapted to slidably receive a surgical staple and to drive a staple forwardly to a predetermined position at which an extension on the staple is effective to restrain the

staple to the predetermined position and further forward movement of the staple is effective to bend at least one leg on the staple and to release the staple from the extension.

25. (New) The device of claim 24, further comprising an actuator slidable longitudinally within the housing for driving the staple forwardly.

26. (New) The device of claim 24, wherein the extension is rupturably joined to the staple.

27. (New) A method for closing a puncture wound in tissue, comprising:
positioning a forward end of an elongate housing adjacent to a puncture wound in tissue;
advancing an actuator forwardly through the elongate housing to advance a staple to a predetermined position, the staple having a restraining means for restraining the staple against further forward movement;

further advancing the actuator forwardly to move at least one leg on the staple to close the staple, and to release the staple from the restraining means.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the at least one leg of the staple extends through the tissue adjacent the puncture wound and a back of the staple is positioned in direct contact with the tissue when the staple is in the predetermined position.

29. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the restraining means comprises an extension extending from a back of the staple, the extension being rupturably joined to the back of the staple to release the staple therefrom.